

of Europe. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, neither the Hollanders, fighting with despair for their own firesides, nor the Scotch and English volunteers, actuated by love of fighting and zeal for their faith, were able on anything like equal terms to hold their own against the Spanish armies, who walked at will to and fro through the Netherlands, save where strong city walls or dykes held them at bay. Yet the Hollander, the Englishman and the Scotchman were trained soldiers, and they were spurred by every hope and feeling which we ordinarily accept as making men formidable in fight. A century passed; and these same Spaniards had become contemptible creatures in war compared with the Dutch and Scotch, the English and French, whom they had once surpassed. Many partial explanations can be given for the change, but none that wholly or mainly -explains it.

What is true of military prowess is even more true of national life as a whole. I do not see how any thinking man can fail to feel now and then ugly doubts as to what may befall our modern civilization—the civilization of the white races, who have spread their influence over the entire world—and the culture they have inherited or acquired in extreme western Asia and in Europe during the last three or four thousand years. There are unpleasant analogies between the twentieth century and Hellenistic antiquity in the first period of the past Alexandrian monarchies; and of course the resemblance is even closer with the orderly, peace-loving, cultivated Roman world from

Trajan to
Marcus Aurelius. The resemblances are in
the way of
analogy rather than homology, it is true, and
there are deep
fundamental differences. But the
resemblances are there.
Why the creative literary spirit should
practically have
vanished from Roman lands after the time of
Trajan, we
do not know. We can see better why the
citizens lost the
traits which make good individual soldiers; but
we can not
see why the very time of the astounding urban
growth of
North Africa, Gaul and Spain should have been
coincident
with the growth of utter inability to organize
on a suffi-